

I CLAIM:

5 *Sub A1* 1 A sanitary napkin adapted to be worn in a crotch portion of an undergarment, said sanitary napkin having opposed longitudinally extending side edges and a longitudinal axis and comprising:

10 a) a fluid-pervious cover layer;

b) an absorbent system under said cover layer, said absorbent system having an absorbent width of at least 64 mm;

15 c) a liquid-impervious barrier layer under said absorbent system;

d) said sanitary napkin being characterised by a thickness less than about 5 mm;

e) said liquid-impervious barrier layer including a pair of linear adhesive zones that extend along said longitudinal axis and are adjacent to respective side edges of the sanitary napkin, said linear adhesive zones bonding said sanitary napkin to the undergarment;

20 f) said absorbent system including at least a pair of preferential bending zones that extend along said longitudinal axis and are adjacent to respective side edges of the sanitary napkin, said preferential bending zones registering with respective linear adhesive zones, said preferential bending zones allowing said sanitary napkin to fold at said preferential bending zone in response to lateral compression applied to said napkin and permitting said napkin to acquire a three-dimensional deformation profile.

25 2. A said sanitary napkin as defined in claim 1, wherein said sanitary napkin is characterized by a flexural resistance of not less than about 400g.

Sub A2 3 A sanitary napkin as defined in claim 2, wherein said sanitary napkin has two opposite longitudinal side areas, said sanitary napkin including a preferential bending line extending obliquely in relation to said longitudinal axis, said preferential bending line extending from one longitudinal side area of the

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sanitary napkin to an opposite longitudinal side area, crossing the longitudinal axis of the sanitary napkin.

4. A sanitary napkin as defined in claim 3, wherein said sanitary
5 napkin includes a plurality of preferential bending lines crossing one another and defining an array of crossing points.

5. A sanitary napkin as defined in claim 4, wherein the crossing points
10 in the array of crossing points extend along said longitudinal axis and facilitate folding of said sanitary napkin at a location along the longitudinal axis, said array of crossing points forming a central preferential bending zone.

6. A sanitary napkin as defined in claim 1, wherein said certain three
15 dimensional deformation profile is a W profile.

7. A sanitary napkin as defined in claim 1, wherein said preferential
bending zones are formed by a process selected from the group consisting of perforating, slitting, cutting and embossing.

8. A sanitary napkin as defined in either claim 1, wherein said
20 preferential bending zones are arcuate.

9. A sanitary napkin as defined in claim 1, wherein said preferential
bending zones are aligned with respective longitudinal adhesive zones.

10. A sanitary napkin as defined in claim 8, wherein said absorbent
25 system includes superabsorbent material.

11. A sanitary napkin as defined in claim 10, wherein said absorbent
30 system includes a blend of cellulosic fibers and superabsorbent material.

12. A sanitary napkin as defined in claim 11, wherein said absorbent system includes an absorbent layer having a basis weight of from about 100 g/m² to about 700 g/m² which has been air-laid as a bottom stratum of pulp, a middle stratum of pulp and superabsorbent polymer disposed in amongst the pulp, and a top stratum containing at least some pulp.

13. A sanitary napkin as defined in claim 12, wherein said absorbent system includes a plurality of absorbent layers in a superposed condition.

14. A sanitary napkin as defined in claim 1, wherein said sanitary napkin includes a flap projecting from a side edge of said sanitary napkin, said flap being foldable about an edge of the crotch portion for retaining said sanitary napkin on the undergarment.

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